

HORRIGAN'S MEDAL.

BY ROBERT FULKERSON HOFFMAN.

A Hero of the Throttle Wins the Plaudits of
a Grateful Public—but Knowing Ones Revolt.



"H, he's not so bad, sometimes," contended a fireman whose feet were dangling from the idle baggage truck on the Pelaya station platform. "I can carry as thin a fire, with Horrigan up, as with any engineer on the division."

"He's a big wind, and no cyclone-cellar handy!" declared Jim Allen, "and I hope he don't pull me if I'm drawn for one of the specials. He keeps me feeling that things are going to happen soon."

Allen spoke with the fixed belief and deep unction of an experienced conductor measuring up a comparatively new engineer.

"Horrigan has too many things on his mind, and he can't seem to keep them there. He's always slopping over into talk," Allen continued.

"If you were to ask him for a chew of tobacco in the dark at a water-tank, on short time, he'd very likely give it if he had it on him. But, before you could get him to pull out for the next siding, he'd start a lecture on what tobacco does to the solar plexus."

"And if you were to turn hot under the collar and throw out your cud on the strength of that talk while you're trying to get him started, he'd turn in at the next stop and give you facts and figures, world without end, on what tobacco is costing the United States, and what per cent of it's wasted through rough handling."

"Horrigan knows too much, besides running an engine! When I break away from him I always feel as if I'd been grabbed by the neck and dipped in a creek."

Red Jones, the brakeman broke in, "He scares me 'way up into the rocks when he gets talking in full release."

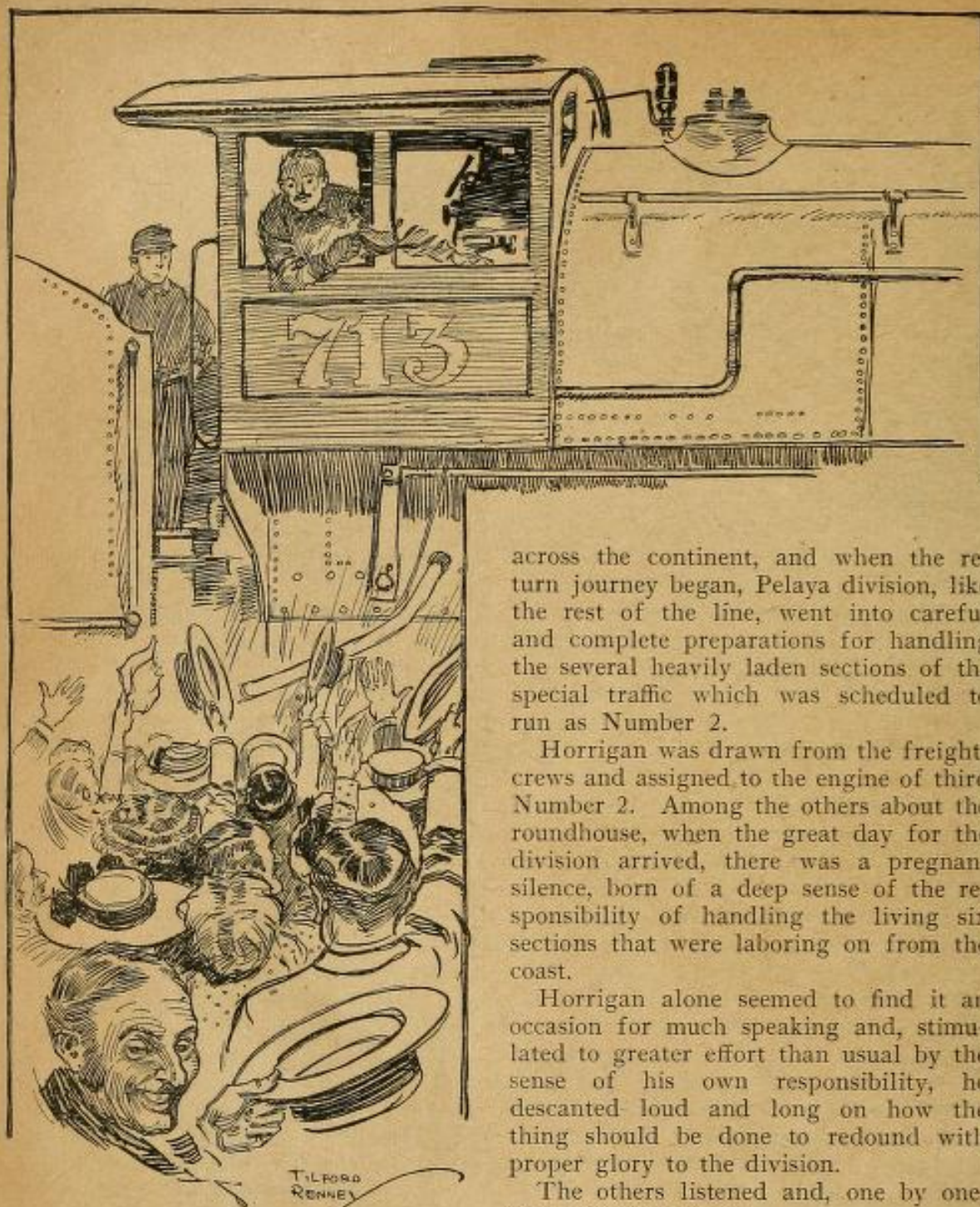
"But he knows engine—don't ever doubt it—and if he pulls us on special, we'll go where the rest of them go. You can bet on it!"

The engineer whom they had been discussing finished his walk across the tracks after leaving the group of talkers, and was humming a happy, nervous sort of nothing in the way of a tune, as he stooped and touched, here and there, about his engine, which was waiting at the coal chutes, just over the way.

Horrigan did not rightly belong on the Pelaya division. This was not so much because he had not been brought up there, although that fact operated as a handicap against him just at first, as it does against any man coming new to the special requirements of the mountain service.

He had been taken on probation, in short, as all men are taken there, and while he had succeeded in weathering the test to the point where he had rights on extra passenger runs, yet he somehow did not seem to belong.

He was a free and somewhat able talker, and seemed to have more than the ordinary predilection for what is commonly called a play to the grandstand. Even that might have passed the broad tolerance of the men of the division had he not possessed the unhappy faculty of injecting into his ever-ready speech a vitriolic tang that sent the comfort of common speed glimmering from any conversation in which he engaged and left his hearers with an unreasonable sense of shame for which, however, they never could quite account.



THEY SWARMED AROUND HERRIGAN'S ENGINE,
JUST BEFORE THE START, AND CHEERED
AND CHEERED AGAIN.

It was to them as though they had been detected in the absurdity of trying to fit a hex-headed bolt into a square counter-sink, and perhaps that was really the trouble. Horrigan had too many angles. He did not fit there.

That was the way matters stood when the Society for the Promotion of Peace on Earth sent some thousands of its members on a well-timed pilgrimage

across the continent, and when the return journey began, Pelaya division, like the rest of the line, went into careful and complete preparations for handling the several heavily laden sections of the special traffic which was scheduled to run as Number 2.

Horrigan was drawn from the freight-crews and assigned to the engine of third Number 2. Among the others about the roundhouse, when the great day for the division arrived, there was a pregnant silence, born of a deep sense of the responsibility of handling the living six sections that were laboring on from the coast.

Horrigan alone seemed to find it an occasion for much speaking and, stimulated to greater effort than usual by the sense of his own responsibility, he descanted loud and long on how the thing should be done to redound with proper glory to the division.

The others listened and, one by one, slipped quietly away.

Duly Number 2 trailed down off the mountain-side and came safely to rest in Pelaya. The happy, zealous occupants of its ten coaches swarmed out and cheered to the echo the crew that had brought them safely thus far upon their return.

They cheered as heartily the engine and crew that backed down upon the train to take up the journey afresh, and Number 2 went strongly and gaily upon its way.

When second Number 2 arrived all

this was done again and Pelaya was taking on a quiet exultation at the unwonted celebrity, while Harrigan, with his preparations made, was circulating freely with the throng, shaking hands with the pilgrims, telling them in awe-inspiring periods how the thing was being done and what he, too, was about to do.

The rest of Pelaya, of course, was equally glad, but it was very quiet about its gladness. Pelaya well knew that while there are trains there are chances.

Second Number 2 was well away when third Number 2 came in and disgorged its burden of enthusiasts. They swarmed around Harrigan's engine, just before the start, and cheered and cheered again, yielding at last only to the polite but urgent insistence of the conductor and trainmen who were trying, with little success, to gather them all quickly back into the train. Harrigan's too effusive greetings and responses from the cab-window were holding them.

Finally they reached the climax of their enthusiasm, and as the tide set back toward the coaches their long-sustained excitement, their gratitude for safety through many perils but dimly understood, and their longing for definite expression centered upon the well-meaning but too demonstrative Harrigan at the cab-window. The great volume of voices trailed off from its cheering into the dear old hymn of benediction: "God be with you till we meet again."

With that appealing strain "death's threatening wave" wafting to his ears from the train, Harrigan pulled out with third Number 2's ten coaches and with a suspicion of more than usual moisture in his eyes. Harrigan was very far from being a hard man. He was a hard talker, that was all.

Harrigan's present triumph was brief, complete, and, to him, most satisfying while it lasted. He wheeled them away magnificently over the first rise that puts up its resistance beyond Pelaya and began dropping down the long reaches of the Eleven-Mile Hill with all of the assurance that careful preparation could give.

His heart was beating high with the warmth of the enthusiasm of which he had unexpectedly become the central object at Pelaya, and he saw himself

thenceforth a towering figure in the division annals.

The run ahead held no special difficulties and he let the train soar down in wide, breathless sweeps that brought joy to the hearts of the travelers and keyed him to a keener gladness in his work.

With the throttle closed and the reverse lever latched well down ahead for drifting, he was sailing them, free as an eagle's flight, where he dared, fondling the brake-valve handle and holding them safely, where he must.

Back in the crowded coaches further campaigns of "peace on earth, goodwill to men," were being planned. Song relieved the weariness of the long journey.

Then, without warning and from no fault of his, disaster fell upon Harrigan and rudely disturbed the confidence of his passengers in their engineer. Deep down in a vital spot of Harrigan's engine a little detailed fracture had been growing for many months, where no outward search could detect it and no foresight or care defeat its growth.

Close in behind the cellar of the main pin, securely hidden within its fit in the wheel, the little, threadlike fracture had been gnawing into the circumference of the pin.

Little by little, it had eaten toward the heart of the pin until now, with the rods fanning the air in a steely blur of light and the wheels humming in dull monotone in the rushing air, the pin was quivering upon its remaining solid core.

Half way down the Eleven-Mile grade, just when Harrigan had yielded to the temptation of one proud, backward look at the inner side of the flying curve of the train, the overtaxed pin let go.

There was only an instant's crashing jumble of sounds from below, before the roads wrenched themselves apart and the swift stripping of his side of the engine began.

In the next moment the forward working parts broke free with the shattered cylinder and fell in the ditch. The side rod, parted at the middle, began its work of thrashing with swift rotary sweeps the cab and after fittings.

First among these to go were the brake pipes and reservoir, and when the seat-

box went shivering upward in a shower of splinters and tools. Horrigan stood upon the deck where he had tumbled without even a chance to touch the brake valve or move it from the lap, where he had set it previously.

With the train-line torn open and the air gone from equilibrium, the brakes went on with an emergency application that set the coaches humping upon their trucks and put in sudden motion a series of wild gymnastics among the passengers.

Before they were fairly untangled from their catapult departures over the tops of car-seats the train had ground itself to an abrupt stop. Then they shook themselves out of the tangle and as hurriedly as Conductor Jim Allen had moved to the front at the first jolt they were flocking to the engine ahead of him.

There he found them, rapidly increasing from a bevy to hundreds, close around the damaged engine. Standing erect in the ruins of the cab, the whole side of which was torn off and gone, was Horrigan with his hand clutching the only projection that remained in reach—the handle of the now useless brake-valve.

Horrigan's cap was gone, his blouse was ripped up the back, and there was one bright spot of blood sending down a trickle of crimson upon his cheek where a splinter had grazed him.

He certainly looked the conventional hero, and as the little human eddy of passengers swirled into a constantly widening pool of frightened humanity about the engine, a murmur of admiration rose and grew until it broke forth into ringing cheer after cheer, punctuated with cries of "Speech! Speech! Speech!"

None but a man built upon Horrigan's lines would have thought for a single moment of responding to this hysterical demand under the circumstances. Perhaps not even Horrigan would have done so had he not been frozen stiff with fright and astonishment while the delight of his ovation at Pelaya was still surging in his mind.

The latter, apparently, was the first clear idea to free itself in his shocked senses and, with the entire train's company for audience—all save one lonely figure that shot out from the rear of the last coach and went running up the

grade—Horrigan clutched the useless brake-valve handle spasmodically and began upon a stammering speech.

Jim Allen, conductor, thrusting his wiry body unceremoniously through the closely packed crowd, had reached the distorted gangway between engine and tender. He had seized the hand-iron and was thrusting his feet into the step when Horrigan's first halting words sounded.

Allen stopped as though stricken powerless, with his foot in the air, as the monstrous folly of the thing made its way to his quick senses, but only for a single look upward into Horrigan's distorted and painfully working face.

Then Allen's white face went even whiter with suppressed wrath, and he sprang up the step and upon the littered deck and stood tensely with the fireman, close behind Horrigan's shoulder.

He permitted Horrigan to ramble through a few sentences of rather pointless platitudes and, at the first tangible halt in Horrigan's now rapid utterances, he stepped in front of him with a ghastly smile, seized his free right hand in a crushing grip and shook it ostentatiously for the benefit of the intent audience below.

With his back turned to the passengers and his eyes boring fiercely into the eyes of the engineer, he was saying while his grip tightened:

"Horrigan, you fool grand-stand player, you haven't done a thing here but roll in luck, and you know it! If you don't cut this out and get down and clean up the pins, so fourth Number 2 can help us down the hill, I'll pound you to a frazzle here on your own deck! Get some tools and get down!"

Then he released his fierce grip upon Horrigan's hand, turned with a strained smile to the cheering audience below and, removing his cap, bowed to them most suavely while Horrigan turned hastily to the tool-box upon the tender.

A few moments later both of them, with the fireman, were thrusting the crowd back from below while the broken rods were stripped off and the crippled engine made ready for movement with help from the coming fourth section.

In the few moments that this byplay had occupied, the only man of all the

train's people who had not rushed toward the engine—Red Bill Jones—true to his great trust, had caught up his flag with its dangling sack of torpedoes and was running swiftly to the rear.

Previously there had been nothing to distinguish him in road talk from Black Bill Jones, except the qualifying adjectives of color which the road parlance had supplied. Thereafter, however, he was to be known as the flag-man who saved third and fourth Number 2. His opportunity had come suddenly, and he was equal to its demand.

Two train lengths up the wide, curving grade the track was lost from sight in the deep and narrow Spire Cut, and beyond that the swell of the mountain hid it for a mile, down which its fourth Number 2 would soon be bowling.

Red Jones ran swiftly to the Spire Cut, fumbling the while with the string of the torpedo bag, meaning to make assurance doubly sure by setting explosive signals in the cut before running farther in the concealing curve to meet the oncoming section.

Thus absorbed in his double duty, a vagrant wedge of rock caught his foot and threw him heavily from the track upon his shoulder into the ditch.

With a muttered imprecation he scrambled hastily to his feet and, much to his astonishment, fell over again quite helplessly upon the spot from which he had arisen.

A piercing stab of pain shot through



"IF YOU DON'T GET DOWN AND CLEAN UP THE PINS SO FOURTH NUMBER 2 CAN HELP US, I'LL POUND YOU TO A FRAZZLE."

his ankle, and when a second effort to rise resulted in a second fall, he examined the offending ankle to find it dislocated and his foot badly awry.

He set his teeth grimly and tugged at the anguished foot as at a boot. It would not right, and he gave up the effort quickly. He crawled back up the ballasted bank of the track and bent a signal-cap upon the rail.

He crept an engine-length and bent another cap upon the rail. Then he began the long crawl upon hands and knees up the grade in the cut with the flag.

The ragged rock-ballast riddled his clothing and bit cruelly into his naked

knees, but he held to the middle of the track with the flag wavering and upended before him, even though he left a dull, irregular trailing stain of blood upon the ballast.

Once he fainted for a moment, with the flag stretched out upon the rail before him and his face fallen among the broken rock, then he came back to the pulsing anguish of his disjunct ankle and crept forward again until he heard the distant whistle of fourth Number 2 at the approach to the Spire Cut.

He stood up then, leaning upon the flagstaff for support, until the black muzzle of the coming engine shot into sight. He raised the flag aloft, waved it in wide and steady sweeps across the track until the deep note of the whistle barked briefly twice in acknowledgment, then he laid the flag carefully upon the rail, spread it to its full length, and rolled over into the ditch, as senseless as the ties bedded in the track.

He was game to the last conscious beat of his heart.

They lifted him to the cab and quickly brought him back to consciousness. They dropped cautiously down through the Spire Cut and coupled in at the rear of third Number 2 and helped them down the hill, while Red Jones lay quietly upon a plank that slanted forward from the fireman's box, in the engine of fourth Number 2.

The kindly members of the Society for the Promotion of Peace on Earth knew nothing of Red Jones or his doings. They were discussing, in subdued tones of gratitude and admiration, Horrigan, the brave engineer who had stood dauntlessly and alone in the wreck of his post and saved them from a dreadful fate—just what they were not so clear on. And Horrigan was a brave man.

So, with this single interruption, the splendid movement of the precious six sections went smoothly on. The day saw Pelaya division well and creditably clear of its great responsibility, and in the days immediately following the respective parts played by Horrigan and Red Jones in the Spire Cut affair became a serious bone of contention.

The whole, bitterly fought, old question of the comparative danger and bravery of the several posts in train

service was reopened with a zest and venom that it had not previously attained.

But the subject was wearing itself out and bade fair to subside when a most unfortunate event tore all lacerated feelings open.

There was not a man in Pelaya who did not fully understand that when Horrigan was discovered clutching the brake-valve handle he might as well have been holding the empty casing of a burned-out rocket, so far as the safety of the train had been concerned, and that the almost human action of the wonderful brake mechanism had automatically taken care of its priceless human freight, at the first crash, without any possible assistance from Horrigan.

Horrigan had, indeed, been a towering figure in the discussion. He had found himself strictly on the defensive for once, and having made the best stand he could against the none too gentle impeachment and innuendo which constantly assailed him, there had been times when he was driven almost to the point of unobtrusively leaving Pelaya.

But the saving reaction had come at length, and Pelaya was inclined to leave him to extract whatever satisfaction he might from the situation—and say no more.

Then came the misfortune. Horrigan was sitting on a baggage-truck at the station, one day some six weeks after the Spire Cut doings, talking with returning confidence to a group of road men. Down the narrow stairway that ascended to the superintendent's office, just back of them, a clerk came clattering into their midst.

"See Horrigan around here anywhere?" he asked briskly. "Oh!" he added, as the group opened a little farther and brought Horrigan into view upon the truck.

"Say, Horrigan, the Old Man has a letter up there from those Peace on Earth people, asking him to give you this package and to read these resolutions to you, and give them to you, too, 'In some suitable public place,' the letter says.

"The Old Man says he's too busy and I'm It. Ready?" he asked, handing the sealed package to Horrigan and opening a richly bound and engrossed document.

Horrigan blankly accepted the pack-



"OUR BRAVE AND KINDLY FELLOW CITIZEN, JONAS FARWELL HARRIGAN, DID, ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF AUGUST—"

age and, for the rest of it, never had an opportunity to answer. A shout of wild derision went up and men slapped each other's backs, while they demanded that the clerk proceed with the reading. Harrigan sat and said nothing.

With due identification, dates and preliminaries, the document was opened, and the listeners granted the clerk the courtesy of silence. The reading proceeded:

Whereas—In the course of this, our human life, there are many deadly perils in which men should stand firmly, one with another; and

Whereas—The qualities of human courage and endurance are always to be desired and commended, but more especially in the times of stress and danger, where only the utmost courage will suffice; and

Whereas—Our brave and kindly fel-

low citizen, Jonas Farwell Harrigan, did, on the eighth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and blank, exhibit and employ these admirable qualities in acts of conspicuous heroism and bravery, to our lasting good and gratitude; therefore, be it, and it is

Resolved—That we, a committee of the Society for the Promotion of Peace on Earth, duly appointed and assembled, do herein, this day and date, extend to Jonas Farwell Harrigan the sincere thanks and the undying respect of this association; and it is

Resolved—That a medal of gold, appropriately designed, shall be provided and presented to Jonas Farwell Harrigan, with a suitably engrossed copy of these resolutions; and it is

Resolved—That a copy of these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of this association, in further loving remembrance of Jonas Farwell Harrigan.

The signatures followed in due order, and when the voice of the clerk ceased he handed the document to Horrigan in a dead silence that contrasted sharply with the earlier burst of derision.

Apparently nobody felt moved to laughter. Who could laugh at such a motive, whatever its objective might be?

Nobody laughed. They who listened had almost come to believe in Horrigan's heroism, against their own expert knowledge of the event in question. Horrigan had come, almost, to believe in it himself. He had done what he could—he was reasoning.

"Nothing!" prompted his inner consciousness. He was sitting, pale-faced and with downcast eyes, looking at the unopened package in his hand.

"Open it, Horrigan," said some one very quietly. "Let's see the medal."

He removed the firm wrappings and sprung the little clasp, exposing the beautiful thing upon its cushion of purple. Depending from its richly chased cross-bar was a liberal circle of the solid red gold of olden Rome, and upon its polished face this inscription:

To
Jonas Farwell Horrigan
From
The S. P. P. E.
For Conspicuous Heroism.
August 8th, 190—.

The reverse side bore, in bas-relief, the heroic figure of a man, warding off, with bared and upraised arm, some unseen danger, while a girlish figure cowered at his feet. A trophy fit to commemorate the best endeavor of any man when taken with the earnest message of its presentation. A worthy token, indeed.

That, until the time of his going from Pelaya, was the one occasion upon which Horrigan said nothing. Having fully complied with the request of those who stood about him, he folded his possessions away and, rising, passed thoughtfully up the street, alone.

When he had gone, one of those who lingered, a fireman, ventured the opinion that the deal wasn't so far off, anyhow. Horrigan had stayed with the engine. He was there, ready to do what he could, and a man who had gone through what he had at Spire Cut and come out of it with as good as a whole skin was entitled to all he could get.

But it wouldn't do. They all knew the truth, and the truth would not down. Red Bill Jones was the only hero of Pelaya. It wasn't right, and they liked right first and glory afterward.

Then it began all over again. Somebody hooted from the caboose-track when Horrigan pulled out next day. Somebody laughed when he signed his report upon the work-book at his return.



GAVE AN ORDER AT THE HOTEL DESK AGAINST HIS WAGES DUE.

The following morning found a savage screed of doggerel verse posted upon the freight-house, in the unfolding of which Harrigan was made to suffer by comparison, while Red Bill Jones was lauded.

It crept into the conversation at the hotel tables when Harrigan could not escape and was not directly addressed. He met it by implication at every street-corner, and even saw the reflex of it in the faces of the children in the street.

He bore it, sometimes in fiercely outspoken anger, sometimes in sullen silence, until, looking from his cab-window one evening when just about to pull down into the yards for the start on a night run, he found a four-foot placard staring at him from the wooden face of the chutes.

Evidently produced with much labor and the aid of a marking-brush, borrowed from the freight-house, this is what he saw:

The Eagle Eye stood on the deck,
The Flagman's hair was red,
That deck was busted, good and hard,
The brake valve sure was dead.
"Aw, what's the use?" the boys all said,
"The Flagman was the stuff!"
But the people seen the Eagle Eye
And never called his bluff.

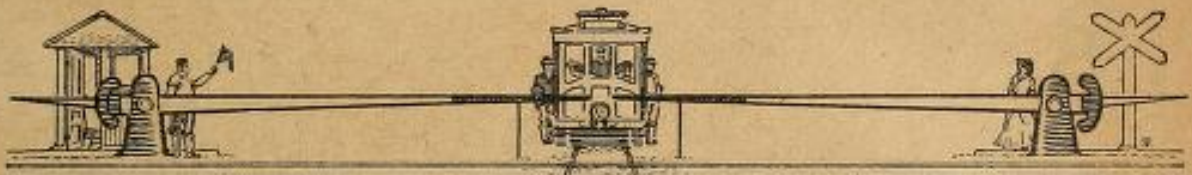
Nothing very serious, this, in the way of an indictment, and yet it struck so close to Harrigan's own inner sense of the situation that it was the one last straw that he could not bear.

Looking at his watch in white-faced anger, he found he had time to return to the hotel across the tracks. Crossing hastily, he packed into an irregular bundle his few possessions, gave an order at the hotel desk against his wages due, paid his bill and, making his way back to the engine without encountering anybody, climbed aboard with his bundle.

In due time he departed on his run.

When he reached the farther end of the division late that night he silently folded the tent of his tenure upon the Pelaya division, and as silently stole away.

It is likely that Pelaya, in time, might have accustomed itself to the idea of the medal, even though it had never become entirely reconciled. But the engrossed resolutions turned loose the muse of every caboose poet on the line—and every line has a large and prolific lot of them, although they will not all confess.



THE GROWING RECORD FOR SAFETY.

COMPETITION between railroads is a good thing for the public, and it is especially good in the matter of safety. The Burlington road has made a record of which it has much reason to be proud, because during the fiscal year, recently ended, not a single passenger was killed of the many millions who traveled on its trains.

This is a record which equals that made by the Pennsylvania Railroad in the year 1908, says the *New Orleans State*, and indicates that the managers of the various railway systems are giving considerable attention to the safety of the traveling public.

The Interstate Commerce Commission, in its last report, showed a substantial gain for safety in travel, for there had been a great reduction in the number of accidents of all classes; and, while this was admitted

to be due in part to diminished traffic on the roads, yet, better discipline, more careful attention to the operation of trains, and the adoption of more safety devices were undoubtedly factors that contributed to the gratifying records made by the roads.

In the last year the activity in many industries has become almost as great as that which marked the days preceding the panic of 1907, for business has been increasing so rapidly that a car shortage is predicted.

Therefore, it is to the credit of the Pennsylvania and Burlington railroads that their remarkable records for safety in the transportation of millions of passengers were made during a period of recovery from panic stagnation, and, therefore, cannot be attributed solely to "lessened pressure and diminished traffic."